



TRADE, ADMINISTRATION, AND CITIES
ON THE PLATEAU OF KARS AND ANI,
THIRTEENTH TO SIXTEENTH CENTURY

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The Vanand-Shirak Plateau

The plateau of Vanand and Shirak is dominated, archaeologically and historically, by the city of Ani. Ani easily overshadows Kars in the heyday of medieval trade, from the tenth to the early fourteenth century. Yet Kars is now the plateau's administrative center and its only city, while Ani is deserted. How did this come about? The late Middle Ages, the period from the Mongol occupation of Armenia in the thirteenth and first half of the fourteenth century to the Ottoman conquest and reorganization of the region in the sixteenth century, supplies the answer.

The replacement of Ani by Kars as the chief city of the plateau is only one issue. In the Bagratuni/Bagratid period and in the twelfth century, before the arrival of the Mongols, a number of small, Armenian-populated towns and castles still existed on the plateau. Two of these, Mren and Bagaran, stood on the plateau's eastern lip to the south of Ani. The town of Kechror or Gechvan, formerly known as Artagers, lay within the plateau towards the south. North of Ani, on the lip of the river ravine, lay the town of Shuragial/Shuregel, formerly Shirakavan. These towns certainly existed in the Bagratuni period and in the early Turkish occupation and did so during the Mongol occupation as well.

Ani and Kars were merely preeminent among all these towns. The question arises, what was the fate of the whole constellation of settlements, including Kars and Ani, during and after the Mongol occupation? If it declined, did the Ottomans, even temporarily, restore prosperity? Is the post-Mongol history of the Kars-Ani plateau one of de-urbanization, that is, of loss of urban character, or did the region

remain urbanized? The issues are closely connected with international trade, with the use of settlements for administrative purposes and with the security or lack of it provided by overlord powers.

The Trade Routes

The state of the network of settlements during the Mongol period should first be established. In the first place, Ani, largely but not exclusively Armenian-populated, was clearly still the dominant city, a trading emporium and the administrative center for the whole district. It was the capital of the local estate of the Mkhargrdzeli or Zakarian family, who had accepted Mongol overlordship, until the early fourteenth century. Ani remained within the Zakarian estate until some time after 1320. The latter is the date of an inscription in the name of the wife, by now widowed, of the last known Zakarian, Shahanshah III. This makes it reasonably certain that the Zakarian tenure of the city had just come to an end or was soon to do so.¹ At some point after or shortly before 1320, the city became an estate of the Mongol Il-Khans themselves, that is to say the Il-Khan received income from taxation directly. Ani was also the capital of the Il-Khanid province of Georgia, which comprised Mkhargrdzeli/Zakarian lands farther east (Lori, Bjni) and the core Georgian territories around Tiflis. The city remained commercially active until the end of the Il-Khanid occupation and beyond, though the sources of its commercial activity were dwindling by the end of the Mongol period. It is true that nothing new seems to have been built at Ani during Il-Khanid times, but buildings were still being restored and partially rebuilt.²

Ani still played a considerable role in East-West trade. During the second half of the thirteenth century, an expanding European economy was pulling in light, valuable goods from China and India, sending back goods to a lower total value and paying for the difference in precious metal, mostly silver.³ From the reign of the Il-Khan Abagha

¹ Kevork J. Basmadjian, "Les inscriptions arméniennes d'Ani, de Bagnaïr et de Marmachên," *Revue de l'Orient Chrétien*, 3d ser., 3 (1922-23): 367-70.

² On repairs and reconstruction in the Mongol period, see pp. 179-86 below.

³ On the European economy, see Philippe Contamine et al., *L'économie médiévale*, 3d ed. (Paris: Armand Colin, 2003), pp. 209-51. On money and metal flows, see Peter Spufford, *Money and Its Uses in Medieval Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 137-38, 143-47, 149-55, and for gold, pp. 211-12; R-H. Bautier, "Les relations économiques des Occidentaux avec les pays

(1265-82), the city of Tabriz was built up not only as the empire's capital but as the hub through which an overwhelming proportion of the empire's intercontinental trade was handled.⁴ East of Tabriz the principal avenue of trade at this stage was the Indian Ocean route leading to the port of Hormuz on the northeast shore of the Persian Gulf, not far from the gulf's entrance. Goods were brought to Tabriz through southern and western Iran via such cities as Shiraz and Isfahan. To some extent, Chinese goods, mostly silk, came along well-known Central Asian tracks to Transoxania (east of the Caspian Sea) and then again through northern Iran, past such cities as Nishapur and Rayy, to Tabriz. The Central Asian route, however, was distinctly secondary as a channel supplying Tabriz: the principal but not the only reason being the opening up of the ports of Kaffa and, later, Tana, respectively in the Crimean peninsula and at the head of the Sea of Azov. With the opening of Kaffa somewhat before 1266, much Chinese silk was immediately rerouted across the steppes via such cities as Urgench and Saray east and northeast of the Caspian.⁵ The Mongol period was the first in which Iranian silk was exported to Europe. This is known, however, from the Pegolotti manual, most of the material for which seems to

d'Orient, au Moyen Age: Points de vue et documents," in M. Mollat, ed., *Sociétés et Compagnies de Commerce en Orient et dans l'Océan Indien* (Paris: S.E.V.P.E.N. 1970), pp. 306-08.

⁴ On the form of Tabriz in this period, see especially Ahmad ibn Abī Bakr ibn Nāsr [Hamdallah] Mustaufi, *The Geographical Part of the Nuzhat al-Qulub*, ed. Guy Le Strange (Leiden: Brill and London: Luzac, 1915), pp. 76-77; Karl Jahn, "Tābris, ein mittelalterliches Kulturzentrum zwischen Ost und West," *Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Anzeiger der philosophisch-historischen Klasse* 16 (1968): 207-11; and in general, Thomas A. Sinclair, *Between the Mediterranean and Iran in the Late Middle Ages: Pegolotti's Ayas-Tabriz Itinerary and Its Commercial Context* (Farnham: Ashgate, forthcoming). On Tabriz's trading role, see William Heyd, *Histoire du commerce du Levant au moyen-âge*, trans. Furcy Raynaud, 2 vols. (Leipzig: Harrassowitz, 1923), vol. 2, pp. 108-40; Sergei P. Karpov, *Italianskie morskije respubliki i Juzhnoe Prichernomor'e v XIII-XV vv.: Problemy torgovli* [The Italian Maritime Republics and the Southern Black Sea in the 13th to 15th Centuries: Problems of Trade] (Moscow: Moscow State University, 1990), pp. 263-69.

⁵ For Kaffa, see Berthold Spüler, *Die Goldene Horde: Die Mongolen in Rußland, 1223-1502*, 2d ed. (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1965), p. 392; Marie Nystazopoulou Pélékidis, "Venise et la Mer Noire du XI^e au XV^e siècle," in Agostino Pertusi, ed., *Venezia e il Levante fino al secolo XV*, 3 vols. (Florence: Olschki, 1973), vol. 2, pp. 551-53; generally, Sinclair, *Between the Mediterranean and Iran*, forthcoming.

date from the 1320s and 1330s, and it is not clear just at which point during the Mongol period this export started.⁶

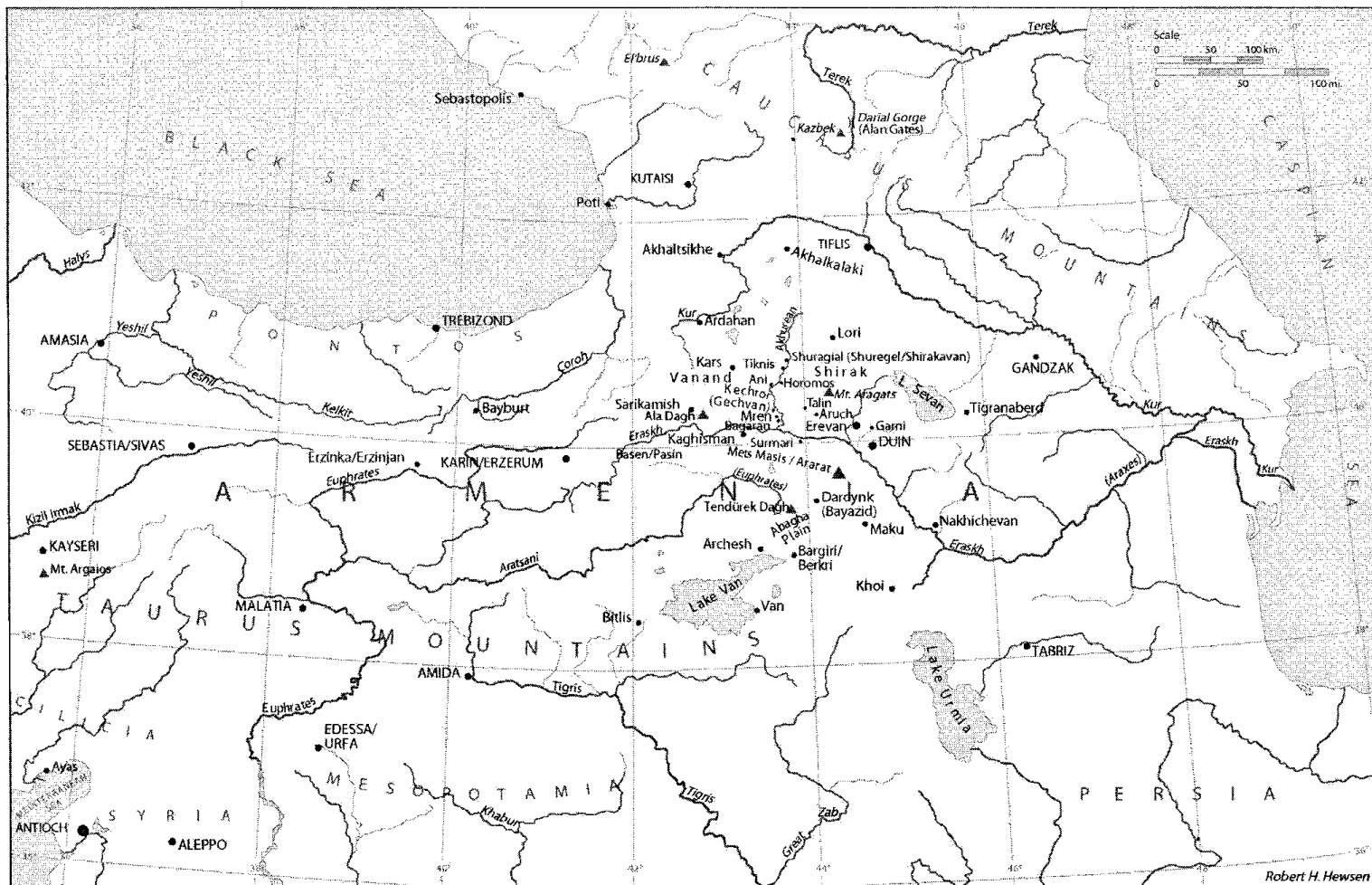
In the direction of Europe, goods could be exported along two main channels. One was via the port of Trebizond on the Black Sea, where Western merchants were established and the minting of coins began at the same time as Tabriz began performing its role as administrative and commercial capital of the Il-Khanid realm.⁷ The second channel was the tracks linking a series of three major Armenian cities, Karin/Erzerum, Erzinka/Erzinjan, and Sebastia/Sivas, after which the way led south to the port of Ayas on the coast of the Armenian Cilician kingdom. The more direct way between Tabriz and Cilicia or Aleppo had been cut off by the warfare between the Il-Khanid empire and the Mamluk sultanate of Egypt and Syria, hostilities that took place in Upper Mesopotamia and north Syria. From Aleppo or Cilicia, the commercial tracks would have run to Upper Mesopotamia and then to the north shore of Lake Van in Armenia.⁸

These lines of movement, starting at Tabriz, shared a common trajectory, or had no reason to take different trajectories, as far as Erzerum, after which the tracks for Trebizond split off northwestward. Between Tabriz and Erzerum, direct tracks were available, traveling through the plains northwest of Khoi and then through further upland plains and valleys in a westward direction. This is the route detailed in the well-known itinerary between Ayas in Cilicia and Tabriz incorporated in the *Pratica della Mercatura*, the trading manual compiled by Pegolotti. The itinerary, however, dated probably to the 1320s, and it is not certain to what extent caravans were traveling along the route it recommends between Tabriz and Erzerum earlier in the second half of

⁶ Francesco Balducci Pegolotti, *La Pratica della Mercatura*, ed. Allen Evans (Cambridge, MA: Medieval Academy of America, 1936), pp. 28-29, and Evans' commentary, pp. xii-xiv, xx-xxi, xxxii-xxiv, xxxvi-xxxviii; Bautier, "Les relations économiques," p. 291.

⁷ On the Italian presence in Trebizond, see Heyd, *Histoire du commerce du Levant*, vol. 2, pp. 94-103; Michel Balard, *La Romanie génoise: XII^e-début du XV^e siècle* (Rome: Ecole française de Rome, 1978), vol. 1, pp. 134-36. On minting of coins, see especially Otto F. Retowski, *Die Münzen der Komnenen von Trapezunt* (Moscow: Synodal, 1910; repr. Braunschweig: Klinkhardt Bierman, 1974), pp. 26-28, 76-104.

⁸ On the Italian presence in Ayas, see Heyd, *Commerce du Levant*, vol. 2, pp. 74-88. Ayas and the route as a whole are discussed at greater length in Sinclair, *Between the Mediterranean and Iran*.



Trade Routes in Medieval Armenia

the thirteenth century.⁹ The traditional line, along which caravans had been active in the Bagratuni period and again in the twelfth century, the first full century of Turkish occupation, ran northwest from Tabriz to the city of Nakhichevan. It then came to the city of Dvin, which had been active in the Bagratuni period and even in the twelfth century but was now a settlement much reduced in size after its sack by the Mongols.¹⁰ Dvin was overlooked, however, by the fortress-town of Garni.¹¹ From here, passing the relatively small town of Erevan, the way led northwest across the Erevan plain to the bridge across the Akhurian/Arpachai River beneath Ani. The line is marked by the two caravansarays (inns) at Talin and Aruch; of these settlements, Talin seems to have been walled.¹² From Ani, merchants traveled westwards to Kars, left the Shirak-Vanand plain via the Sarikamish defile, and arrived in the plain of Basen/Pasin, immediately east of Erzerum.

Although this line was the standard route through Ani, the city and its neighbor Kars owed their exact positions and some of their prosperity to their function as crossroads settlements. For one thing, a second route between Tabriz and Ani existed, which probably served merchants carrying lighter goods. At the river confluence near Dvin, one could stay on the Arax River, passing round the base of Mount Ararat, as far as the town of Surmari (originally Surb Mari/Saint Mary). This town lay on the plain, near Ervandashat, the city which seems to have

⁹ Pegolotti, *Pratica della Mercatura*, pp. 28-29. For a discussion of the date and line of itinerary, see Sinclair, *Between the Mediterranean and Iran*.

¹⁰ *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2d ed. (Leiden & London, 1960-2008), s.v. "Dvin," vol. 2, pp. 678-81.

¹¹ On Garni at this stage, see *Haykakan Sovetakan Hanragitaran* [Armenian Soviet Encyclopaedia], 12 vols. (Erevan: Armenian Academy of Sciences, 1974-1986), vol. 2, p. 692.

¹² On the caravansarays, see Varazdat M. Harutyunyan, *Mijnadaryan Hayastani karavanatnern u kamurjnere* [The Caravansarays and Bridges of Medieval Armenia] (Erevan: Haypethrat, 1960), pp. 29-35, 55-60. The author, p. 55, dates the Talin caravansaray to the twelfth or thirteenth century. The Ottoman army, returning from the battle of Chaldiran in 1514, encamped near the "kale" (castle or walled settlement) of Talin; Aruch, however, was at this stage only a village. See Feridun Bey, *Mecmu'a-i münşeat üs-selatin* [The Sultans' Writings: A Collection] 2 vols. (Istanbul, 1264-65/1848-49), vol. 1, p. 405. On the bridge below Ani, see M.-F. Brosset, *Les ruines d'Ani*, 2 pts. (St. Petersburg: Eggers, 1860-1861), pp. 10-11; H.F.B. Lynch, *Armenia, Travels and Studies*, 2 vols. (London: Longmans, Green, 1901; 3d repr. New York: Armenian Prelacy 1990), vol. 1, p. 376; Harutyunyan, *Mijnadaryan Hayastani karavanatnern*, pp. 77-80. Note also the bridges at other points on the Akhurian (pp. 74-77, 81-87), all of which seem to have broken down.

been its predecessor. Ervandashat, though founded in the Hellenistic period, was still in existence as late as the twelfth century, and the process by which the population transferred from the one to the other was therefore gradual. Like Ervandashat, Surmari was sustained by trade as well as by agriculture.¹³

From Surmari, one could turn northward up the Akhurian and climb the eastward rampart of the plateau to Bagaran, which lay precisely at the plateau's lip; and from here one could continue either along the plateau's edge past the town of Mren to Ani or in a more northwesterly direction to Kars. In the twelfth century (before the Mongol period), an amir at Surmari was controlled by another amir at Kars. This circumstance immediately suggests an economic connection between the two, a connection that could only have been maintained by movement along the tracks through Bagaran.¹⁴ Surmari was approached from the south by a route originating in the Lake Van region. Within that region, the cities of Archesh/Erjish and Bargiri/Berkri were the nearest to Surmari. Another important source of, and magnet for, traffic was the Il-Khanid palace "on" Ala Dagħ; in reality, the palace lay on or at the edge of what later was to be called the Abagha plain, that which is now administered from the (wrongly named) town of Chaldiran at its western border.¹⁵ From the Abagha plain, the track

¹³ On Surmari during the Bagratuni, early Turkish, and Mongol periods, see Mikayel V. Hovhannesian, *Hayastani berdere* [The Fortresses of Armenia] (Venice: Mekhitarist Press, 1970), pp. 820-23. Surmari was attacked by Mongol forces in the initial invasion. See Kirakos Gandzaketsi, *Patmutyun Hayots* [History of Armenia], ed. Karapet A. Melik-Ohanjanyan (Erevan: Armenian Academy of Sciences, 1961), vol. 2, pp. 260-61. On Ervandashat, see René Grousset, *Histoire de l'Arménie des origines à 1071* (Paris: Payot, 1947), pp. 289-90.

¹⁴ On the emirate in the twelfth and early thirteenth century, see M. Fahrettin Kırzioğlu, *Kars tarihi* [History of Kars], vol. 1 (Istanbul: Işıl Matbaası, 1953), pp. 384-85, 401, 410, 419-31; Vladimir Minorsky, *Studies in Caucasian History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953), p. 96. Minorsky, p. 90, shows that the two emirates were sometimes ruled by the same person.

¹⁵ On the choice of the Ala Dagħ by Hulagu and its use by Hulagu and Abagha, see *The Cambridge History of Iran*, 7 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969-1991), vol. 5, pp. 350, 353, 356, 373, 375. Soon after being installed as the first Il-Khan (1259 A.D.), Hulagu had a palace built "on the plain of Darn, which place in their own language they call Alatağh." See Grigor of Akanc', *History of the Nation of Archers (the Mongols)*, ed. Robert P. Blake and Richard N. Frye (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press), p. 342. Vardan, *Havakumn patmutian Vardanay vardapeti* [The Historical Compilation of Vardan the Vardapet], ed. Ghevond Alishan (Venice: Mekhitarist Press, 1862), p. 151, named the location Darin or Daran-dasht (plain of Darn); cf. *Manr zhamanakagrutyunner XIII-XVIII dd.* [Minor Chronicles of the 13th-

climbed over the east outliers of Tendurek Dagħ; after the saddle here, it descended to the vicinity of the town of Daroynk, later Bayazid. This lay in a secluded valley somewhat elevated above the plain which stretched from the south foot of Ararat. Daroynk, however, does not seem to have played a significant role in long-distance trade at this stage. The settlement which did, where the track coming from the Lake Van region intersected with the Pegolotti track, was the present Karakent, Pegolotti's "Scaracanti," later to be, and possibly already by now, a toll station established by the Il-Khan authorities.¹⁶ The track coming from the Van region, however, left Karakent, again in a northerly direction, climbed over another ridge and descended past a caravansaray of thirteenth-century date to Surmari.¹⁷ Thus traffic originating in the Lake Van basin could come via Surmari to Ani and Kars.

Although Ani and Kars could be final destinations, tracks stretched northward from the two cities which meant that each of the two lay at a crossroads location. Ani was connected to Tiflis, the Georgian capital, where toward the end of the thirteenth century silk was woven, both in the city and probably in the nearby villages.¹⁸ The way to Tiflis would normally pass along the west bank of the Akhurian as far as Shuragial, where the river would be forded. From Kars, one could work northwards over a series of plains to the town of Ardahan, after which the towns of Akhaltsikh and Akhalkalak could be reached. From here in turn, the Black Sea ports of Poti and Sebastopolis were easily accessible.¹⁹ Goods coming from Tiflis could be transported from Ani to the

18th Centuries], ed. Vazgen A. Hakobyan, 2 vols. (Erevan: Armenian Academy of Sciences, 1951-1956), vol. 1, p. 45 (Stephen the Bishop); vol. 2, p. 146 (Anonymous of Sebastia; "Aran"). Mustawfi, *Nuzhat*, p. 101, says the palace was upstream (that is, east of) Bargiri/Berkri on the Band-i Mahi River, which agrees perfectly with the Armenian sources. Tadevos Kh. Hakobyan, also suggests that the Ala Dagħ palace must have played a role in sustaining Ani. He points, too, to the cities of Van and Manazkert as possible trading partners. See his *Ani mayrakaghak* [Ani the Capital] (Erevan: Erevan State University, 1988), p. 266.

¹⁶ Pegolotti, *Mercatura*, p. 29.

¹⁷ On this caravansaray, see Thomas A. Sinclair, *Eastern Turkey: An Architectural and Archaeological Survey*, 4 vols. (London: Pindar, 1987-1990), vol. 1, pp. 404-05, vol. 4, p. 360 and bibliography.

¹⁸ Marco Polo, *The Description of the World*, ed. Arthur C. Moule and Paul Pelliot, 2 vols. (London: Routledge, 1938), vol. 1, p. 100.

¹⁹ There was a Genoese presence in Sebastopolis from the 1280s to the 1450s, if not longer. Sebastopolis traded primarily with the Crimea. See Balard, *Romanie génoise*, vol. 1, pp. 141-42; Heyd, *Commerce du Levant*, vol. 2, pp. 192, 380; Karpov, *Italianskie morskoe respubliki*, pp. 103-04, and on Poti, p. 102.

west along the Trebizond or Ayas route just like any other, and it may be that it was doing so already: this was the *seta giorgiana* ("Georgian silk") of Italian sources.²⁰

The Mongol Period: Ani

Having established the trails carrying intercontinental and more local traffic passing through the Vanand-Shirak plateau, it is necessary to place the cities and towns on that pattern of roads and see what the cities looked like. Ani, as argued above, lay at the crossroads of the great intercontinental way coming ultimately from India and China and immediately from Tabriz; the road from Tiflis; and the secondary track coming along the plateau's edge from Surmari and Bagaran. The city occupied just the same area as it had in Bagratuni times (ninth-eleventh centuries): it spread over the somewhat twisting and curving table between two deeply-cut ravines, the Tsaghkotsadzor (Flower Vale) to the west and that of the Akhurian to the east. A knob of rock which effectively delimited the main body of the city, the flat expanse of ground behind the Bagratuni walls to the north, and which at a certain point widened the spit between the two ravines, was still occupied by the citadel. An extensive network of caves, not connected by vertical tunnels with the main residential area on the plateau, constituted an extension, nevertheless, of the city's residential capacity and population, including as they did churches and burial chapels.²¹

Ani had suffered massacre and plunder by the Mongols, but there is no evidence that the subsequent recovery was difficult or labored.²²

²⁰ Bautier, "Les relations économiques," p. 291.

²¹ Among the caves, 400 residences have been found, as have thirty churches and other chapels created mainly for the purpose of burials. The caves were not necessarily occupied all at one time, but the present sum total of them gives an idea of the scale of the residential population of the city as a whole. See *Ani*, no. 12 in the series *Documenti di architettura armena*, with texts by Paolo Cuneo, Armen Zarian, Gabriella Uluhogian, Nicole Thierry, Jean-Michel Thierry (Milan: Ares, 1984), pp. 11, 14; Roberto Bixio et al., *Ani, l'antica capitale armena: Campagna di prospezioni sotteranee* (Genoa: Centro Studi Sotteranei, 2004), also forthcoming as *Ani 2004: Surveys on the Underground Settlements*. Dr. Bixio has kindly provided the text of this survey.

²² On the Mongol sack of Ani, see Kirakos Gandzaketsi, *Patmutyun Hayots*, vol. 2, p. 258. The Franciscan friar William of Rubruck, passing through Ani early in 1255, found the place strongly defended. He mentions its one thousand churches and two mosques and seems to have been thoroughly impressed. See *The Mission of Friar William of Rubruck: His Journey to the Court of the Great Khan Möngke, 1253-1255*,

The city was highly secure. Its walls had been repaired or rebuilt in various places or stretches by the Zakarians over the years 1208-31.²³ The period was not one of new construction: new churches were unnecessary, given the number and the great elegance of those built during the Bagratuni period. Nevertheless repair work and additions to existing churches went ahead. Additions to the east end of the Church of Tigran Honents, for example, were finished in 1251; a belfry was added to the Church of the Redeemer (Holy Savior) in 1271.²⁴

Ani, it seems, was the seat both of an archbishop and of a bishop whose responsibilities may have been confined to the city; and the city seems to have been managed by a lay governor. The arrangement (archbishop, bishop, lay governor) had been established under the Zakarians in the period before the Mongol capture (that is, between 1199 and 1239). In the inscriptions of that period, the archbishop is identified as the archbishop of Ani and Shirak or the *mayrakaghak* (capital city). Besides the archbishop, however, a bishop is mentioned; the purview of the bishop's duties, as previously suggested, may have been the city only. Archbishop and bishop apart, there were officials known as *amira* (prince) of the city, *malik* or *melik* (king), and *ishkhan* (prince), none of whom seem to be Zakarian family members, perhaps with estates that included Ani. They apparently were Zakarian-appointed governors.²⁵ The arrangement seems to have been continued during the Mongol period, when besides the archbishop and bishop there is mention of a *melik* and a *paron* (*baron*), meaning generally a person of local power or influence. These seem to have been governors, but now Mongol-appointed.²⁶

trans. P. Jackson, intro. Peter Jackson and David Morgan (London: Hakluyt Society, 1990), p. 270.

²³ Basmadjian, "Les inscriptions arméniennes," 3 (1922-23): 70-73, 314-19, 323-28, nos. 34-36, 38, 41-44, 46-47, 51-57.

²⁴ Ibid., 3 (1922-23): 331-44, nos. 63-74; 4 (1924): 356-62, nos. 75-80. For the Church of Tigran Honents, see pp. 331-32, no. 64; cf. *Ani . . . Documenti*, pp. 81-82. Possibly the inscription refers to a reconstruction of the narthex. For the belfry of the Church of the Redeemer, see Basmadjian, 4 (1924): 360-61, no. 79; cf. *Ani . . . Documenti*, p. 76. T.Kh. Hakobyan, *Ani mayrakaghak*, p. 269, also points out the significance of inscriptions commemorating repairs or additions.

²⁵ Karen Matevosian, "Anii episkoposakan atore" [Ani's Episcopal Throne], pt. 1, *Bazmavep* 154 (1996): 254-71 (for the governor, 262-63); pt. 2, 155 (1997): 153-70.

²⁶ Ibid., pt. 2: 153-61. The inscription on the Church of the Holy Apostles of 1251 (pp. 155-57) suggests two bishops, as does another (pp. 157-78). For the governor, see p. 158; cf. the *Ishkhanats Ishkhan*, *Paron Bughtay* known in 1289 (Matevosian, pt. 2, pp. 162-63). The Mongols appointed a commissioner (Latin: *ballivum*, roughly

The long period of European expansion in the thirteenth century came to an end in the second decade of the fourteenth century. In the third decade, the European economy stagnated, and in the fourth decade, there started a recession which went into free fall in the next decade.²⁷ As buying power decreased, so too did the volume of luxury imports which Europe was able to attract. After the death of Abu Sa'id, the last ruler to succeed in keeping the entire Il-Khanid empire intact, rival candidates for the throne, supported by powerful court figures or army commanders, fought over the throne for more than fifteen years.²⁸ These conditions were highly inimical to trade, and some of the Italian trading cities withdrew personnel from Tabriz or forbade merchants to go there.²⁹ The Ayas route ceased functioning in 1337 because the Mamluks acquired this and other cities in Cilicia at that date.³⁰ In these circumstances, one might expect that Ani, dependent on trade, would contract, if not disintegrate as a city altogether.

Inscriptional evidence does not suggest any such contraction, though some evidence for out-migration from Ani in the early 1330s

"deputy," "bailiff") at Ani according to William of Rubruck, and the governors in the Armenian sources seem to correspond to the persons holding that post. Jackson and Morgan (Rubruck, p. 270n6) suggest that the commissioner mentioned by Rubruck held the post of *darughā* or officer responsible for the defense of a city and responsible, too, for collecting taxes. Matevosian (pt 2, p. 157) points out the existence of a *sahip divan* (Chancellor or Treasury Minister)—one is known to have died in 1261. Matevosian seems to suggest that the governor was the same as the *sahip divan*, and given the *darughā*'s responsibilities this seems reasonable. For another governor, though, it is not clear over which region he had jurisdiction. See Ghevond Alishan, *Shirak: Teghagrutiun patkeratsoys* [Shirak. Topography in Pictures] (Venice: Mekhitarist Press, 1881), pp. 139-40.

²⁷ Contamine, *L'économie médiévale*, pp. 271-97, 314-17.

²⁸ For a thorough account, see Steven Album, "Studies in Ilkhanid History and Numismatics, I: A Late Ilkhanid Hoard (743/1343)," *Studia Iranica* 13 (1984): 49-116.

²⁹ One of the powerful figures in late Il-Khanid history, Hasan, son of Choban, abused Italian merchants in Tabriz, and eventually both Venice and Genoa instructed their merchants to avoid the city. See Freddy Thiriet, *Régestes des délibérations du sénat de Venise concernant la Roumanie*, 3 vols. (Paris: La Haye 1958-1961), vol. 1, p. 39, no. 83 (Venetian decree of 1338); Luciano Petech, "Les marchands italiens dans l'Empire mongol," in Luciano Petech, *Selected Papers on Asian History* (Rome: Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1988), pp. 161-86 (p. 185, for two Genoan decrees, 1340 and 1342). Generally, Karpov, *Italianskie morskoe respubliki*, pp. 95, 97.

³⁰ Claude Mutaftian, *La Cilicie au carrefour des empires*, 2 vols. (Paris: Belles Lettres, 1988), vol. 1, p. 471.

does exist. As stated, Zakarian rule came to an end sometime around 1320. Ani became the personal estate (*khas inju*) of the Il-Khan. But the Armenian inscription, evidently a translation of a text in Persian or Arabic, which describes this state of affairs also says that two parons, Grigor and Hovhannes, had renovated the city. The inscription talks of taxes and trades, none of which suggests a collapse. The inscription is dateless, but it falls somewhere in the 1320s or the first half of the 1330s. Unfortunately, the lack of a date means that the inscription's value as an indicator of Ani's inability to resist the economic decline is limited. Another inscription, this time in Persian, and certainly prepared before the end of the Il-Khan Abu Sa'id's reign (1335), mentions various taxes, but the information which it purveys, or purports to purvey, does not help in the analysis of actual economic conditions within the city.³¹ Nevertheless, the two inscriptions do not point to a contraction or decline. The only evidence in this direction pertaining to the period before 1350 dates from 1331 and has to do with the decision of some Armenians, presumably merchants, to leave the city and go to Astrakhan (northwest of the Caspian Sea and on the northern silk route between China and the Crimean ports) and then to the Crimea itself. The migration to another trade route, admittedly one that itself should have been affected by European stagnation, certainly suggests a difficulty in earning a livelihood from trade.³²

Repairs and rebuilding, on the other hand, went ahead as before: the last inscription in the period relating to repairs and inscriptions dates to the year 1348.³³ Most impressive, the dome of the Church of

³¹ On these inscriptions at Ani, see Matevosian, "Anii episkoposakan atore," pt. 2, pp. 161-62; Kirzioğlu, *Kars tarihi*, pp. 448-50. On lines 8-10 of the second inscription, the complaint is expressed that leading members of the city have abandoned it; as evidence of actual abandonment, which might be a clue to the city's decline, such an assertion in an inscription is subject to highly ambiguous interpretations. T.Kh. Hakobyan, *Ani mayrakaghak*, pp. 270-73, argues that heavy taxes in the late thirteenth century and early fourteenth century were in part responsible for the city's decline.

³² V.A. Hakobyan, *Manr zhamanakagrutyunner*, vol. 2, p. 529, no. 28; cited by Hovhannesian, *Hayastani berdere*, p. 711; it is this which is discussed, apparently, by T.Kh. Hakobyan, *Ani mayrakaghak*, p. 281.

³³ Basmadjian, "Les inscriptions arméniens," 4 (1924): 362-71, nos. 81-88; 5 (1925-26): 156-61, nos. 89-94. The inscriptions, again, are cited by T.Kh. Hakobyan, *Ani mayrakaghak*, pp. 263, 269, as evidence that Ani did not shrivel up in the early fourteenth century. Hakobyan, p. 278, rebuts emphatically Chamchian's view that Ani's life collapsed after an earthquake taking place in 1319.

the Redeemer was repaired in 1342.³⁴ Manuscript copying, attested in the late thirteenth century, continued into the fourteenth century, with surviving copied manuscript dating to 1347.³⁵ Nor does the coin evidence bear out the notion that the city contracted. A monetary reform was initiated in the Islamic year 697 or 1297-98 A.D. by the Il-Khan Ghazan. Among the features of this reform was an increase in the number of mints in order to meet the need for currency in given centers.³⁶ The evidence of the coins shown in the Appendix below suggests that whereas under Ghazan (694-703/1295-1304) and his successors Uljaytu (703-16/1304-16) and Abu Sa'id (716-36/1316-35) minting was quite sparse, especially when considered relative to the length of these Il-Khans' reigns, it was more frequent under the later Il-Khans, whose reigns were notorious for violent infighting and sudden depositions from and accessions to the throne. Paradoxically, a certain increase in frequency can be detected.

There are many factors to be taken into account: these include the circumstance that the territory controlled by the last Il-Khan, Anushiravan (745-57/1344-56), was confined to the Caucasus, northeast Armenia, and Azerbaijan, so this Il-Khan's administration might be expected to emphasize the relatively small number of mints which it did control. Whether or not the argument is cogent and does at all explain the increase in frequency of minting, another factor may be more significant. It seems clear that from the reign of Muhammad (736-38/1336-38) onwards the hilltop town of Garni, protected by a spacious, secure citadel, on the far side of the Erevan plain from Ani, was given increasing attention by the authorities: this can be judged straightaway from the coins listed in the Appendix. One aspect of the coins is especially worthy of note. At Garni, a hoard of coins dating from 746/1345-46 and minted in the name of Anushiravan, the last Il-

³⁴ Basmadjian, "Les inscriptions arméniens," 5 (1925-26): 156-57, no. 80. Gabriella Uluhogian, "Les églises d'Ani d'après le témoignage des inscriptions," *Revue des études arméniennes*, n.s., 28 (1992): 393-417; the significance of the late date is noted on p. 401, and she translates the word "norogetsi" ("I renovated") in the inscription as "j'ai reconstruit" (note 33). Conceivably the renovation could have taken the form of a complete reconstruction, but the inscription suggests merely a repair.

³⁵ Karen A. Matevosian, "Scriptoria et bibliothèques d'Ani," *Revue des études arméniennes*, n.s., 20 (1986-87): 214, 216.

³⁶ Coins were actually minted here before Ghazan's reform. See the coin of 684/1285-86 in the Appendix. Probably a few issues were struck at Ani before the mint was abandoned, only to be started up again under Ghazan Khan.

Khan, has been unearthed.³⁷ Of these coins, twenty-nine bore the mint name Garni, and the weights of the great majority of the coins were the same, 1.40 grams. This strongly suggests that the hoard was buried almost immediately after minting, since with commercial use the coins' weights would have started to vary, some being worn to a greater extent than others. Apart from the coins minted at Garni, or at least bearing the mint name "Garni," there were in the hoard similar finds of coins bearing the mint names "Ani" and "Erevan": thirty-two of Ani, nearly all of whose weights were again 1.40 grams, and twenty-nine of Erevan, also mostly of 1.40 grams. At the very least, these large numbers of coins imply that Garni was considered a safe enough location in which to hoard so many coins in times that any inhabitant of the district would have good reason to judge insecure. But they also suggest that the hoarder was the state itself and that coins minted in Ani and Erevan were kept in safety at Garni until the point of need; for example, to pay troops.³⁸

Combining the evidence of building, manuscript production, and coins, it is possible to arrive at the following view. From the third decade of the fourteenth century onwards, intercontinental trade stagnated and then declined, rapidly so in the century's fifth decade. There would have been good reasons for Ani to contract, and the episode of the migration to Astrakhan points to the conclusion that at least some migration away from Ani took place. Similarly, by the end of the period there seems to have been a shift of governmental functions, which of them and to what extent is unclear, from Ani to Garni. But these matters apart, the city was intact: it did not lose population to the extent that it was commercially non-viable. Nor, on the other hand, had the volume of goods in transit declined, nor had merchants decided to go by different routes to the extent and in such a way that the city could no longer be sustained by trade and therefore not survive. All the evidence leads to the conclusion that the city did survive and that in the first half of the fourteenth century, despite the use of the more southerly "Pegolotti" track, the commercial routes through the region were the same as in the earlier part of the Mongol period in the second half of the thirteenth century.

³⁷ See Appendix.

³⁸ It is even possible that the striking of coins bearing the names Ani and Erevan was done at Garni, since the location was easier to defend.

The Mongol Period: Kars and Other Towns

It remains to survey the other settlements on the Shirak-Vanand plateau during the Mongol occupation. Two days' walk along the track from Ani toward the Sarikamish defile and Erzerum lay the small city of Kars. Besides the formidable rock on which its citadel stood, the city owed its existence to the tracks (one intercontinental, one more of an interregional nature) which intersected there. Like Ani, the city was mainly but not exclusively populated by Armenians. Despite its strong position, Kars could not be anything but a second string to Ani. Nevertheless, the city was the seat of a local Turkish dynasty in the twelfth century and again in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth century.³⁹ Kars was the seat of a bishop, comparable in status to the bishop rather than the archbishop of Ani.⁴⁰ The coin count is feeble: in the Appendix, there is one coin of 699/1299-1300 and one of the mid-1330s, which despite the incompleteness of the list may be a reflection of the true volume of coin production. These circumstances are a reasonable indication of the size of Kars during the Mongol period itself. The absolute and relative size of the two cities cannot have been far different from what they had been since the Turkish invasions of the eleventh century.⁴¹

It is necessary to look as well at the secondary track coming from Surmari along the edge of the plateau and going southwards from Ani. The small town of Mren (some way short of Bagaran), in which stood the well-known seventh-century cathedral, was probably surrounded by a wall during the Mongol period. This is known from the account of the attack by the Turk Ildegiz of the dynasty which controlled Tabriz and Nakhichevan in 1163. Ildegiz is said to have burned the "fortress" and killed 4,000 people. The fortress in reality will have been the town

³⁹ Kırzioğlu, *Kars tarihi*, pp. 386, 388-90, 402-03, 407; Osman Turan, *Doğu Anadolu Türk devletleri tarihi* [History of the Turkish States in Eastern Anatolia] (Istanbul: Turan Neşriyat Yurdu, 1973), p. 15; Minorsky, *Studies*, p. 83. The amirs were sometimes the subjects of the Saltukid princes of Erzerum (Kırzioğlu, p. 388; Turan, pp. 13, 31) and sometimes of the Shah-i Arman of Khlat/Ahlat (Turan, pp. 31, 90).

⁴⁰ Kirakos Gandzaketsi, *Patmutyun Hayots*, vol. 2, p. 310; Matevosian, "Anii episkoposakan atore," pt. 2, p. 155.

⁴¹ On the initial sack of Kars by the Mongols in 1236, despite the city's surrender, see Kirakos Gandzaketsi, *Patmutyun Hayots*, vol. 2, p. 260; Hovhannesian, *Hayastani berdere*, p. 756; Kırzioğlu, *Kars tarihi*, p. 438. But as in the case of Ani the city evidently recovered quickly from its capture and plunder.

itself, surrounded by a wall; it is unlikely the wall was not kept up thereafter.⁴² In addition, a palace with garden was built in Mren in 1276. The cathedral was restored in the second half of the thirteenth century, and an inscription of 1320, too, is known.⁴³ All this information suggests a small but flourishing walled town with probably an exclusively Armenian population.

Farther south along the road and on the edge of the plateau was the town of Bagaran. Its citadel lay on the rim of the escarpment and was inhabited; a church stood within the enclosure. A limited walled area extended down the escarpment's face. The town's inhabited area spread farther, on flat land by the river, and among the houses here there were at least two churches. In all, five churches are known, making this a sizable settlement. Bagaran had a governor (*rayis*) in 1224, shortly before the Mongol period; at a similar date, the town and its dependent countryside were the estate of a paron, in this case a minor aristocrat who would have been granted the estate by the Zakarians. These arrangements very likely persisted during the Mongol period.⁴⁴ On the plain, near the Akhurian-Arax confluence and south of and below Bagaran lay Surmari. The city was relatively large, located in a deep valley and strongly fortified, with its entrance being in the depth of the valley.⁴⁵

Unlike Mren and Bagaran, the town of Kechror, formerly Artagers, lay off the main tracks. It was situated on the long tongue created by the cliffs of two deep ravines, where a river branched into two and the ravines subsequently reunited. It was the seat of an amir in the twelfth century, which strongly suggests that in the Mongol occupation a town continued to exist here, enclosed within the walls stretching above the

⁴² Vardan, *Havakumn patmutian*, p. 127; Minorsky, *Studies*, p. 93; Hovhannesian, *Hayastani berdere*, pp. 744-45.

⁴³ On Sumari (Surb Mari) and its environs, see Alishan, *Shirak*, p. 140; Michel and Nicole Thierry, "La cathédrale de Mrèn et sa décoration," *Cahiers Archéologiques* 21 (1971): 44, 51.

⁴⁴ Hovhannesian, *Hayastani berdere*, pp. 661-63, 665; Ashkharbek Kalantar, *Armenia from the Stone Age to the Middle Ages: Selected Papers*, ed. Grigor H. Kharrakhanian, trans. Vahe G. Gurzadyan (Neuchâtel and Paris: Recherches et Publications, 1994), pp. 99-103.

⁴⁵ Ruy Gonzalez de Clavijo, *Embajada a Tamorlan*, ed. Francisco L. Estrada (Madrid 1943; republished, Madrid: Castalia, 1999, 2004), pp. 97-98; Gonzalez de Clavijo, *Embassy to Tamerlane. 1403-1406*, trans. Guy Le Strange (London: Routledge, 1928), pp. 140-42. Although Clavijo describes what he saw in 1404, his information would be valid for the Mongol period as well.

ravines and along flat land on the one side, which made an assault relatively easy.⁴⁶

The picture should be completed by describing the roads north of Ani. From the Mongol period, or even those immediately preceding or following it, there is no direct information on Shuragial/Shirakavan, where a church built by the Bagratuni king Smbat I in 897 stood, but, given its position by the ford over the Akhurian River, a town is likely to have remained here rather than its population dispersing elsewhere.⁴⁷ It is known that the castle at Tiknis, somewhat to the west, was garrisoned at this period.⁴⁸ It probably acted as a citadel for Shuragial. In sum, then, the Mongol period saw the active functioning of a network of cities and towns—Ani, Kars, Bagaran, and Mren. These cities and towns were sustained by commerce, which had by no means deserted the Shirak-Vanand plateau.

Between the Mongol and Ottoman Periods

In the period between the final collapse of Il-Khanid power in about 1350 and the Ottoman conquest of the Kars-Ani plateau in the mid-sixteenth century, significant changes occurred.⁴⁹ In the first place, Ani rapidly lost population at the beginning of the period, since the inter-continental trade which had maintained its population simply failed to pass through the plateau of Shirak and Vanand on a sufficient scale. No building activity is known, whether in new structures or in additions or

⁴⁶ On Kechror's history and archaeology, see Sinclair, *Eastern Turkey*, vol. 1, pp. 413-16. For the amir, see Vardan, *Havakumn patmutian*, pp. 130-32 (the amir Khara-chay; Turkish: Karaca). The information relates to a time shortly after the Armenian year 626 or 1177 A.D. For an inscription of the year 1222, see Alishan, *Shirak*, p. 130.

⁴⁷ On Shuragial in the twelfth century, see Kırzioğlu, *Kars tarihi*, p. 403. On the church, see Nikolai Marr, *Ani: Knizhnaia istoriia goroda i raskopki* [Ani: The City's History from Literary Sources and Excavations] (Moscow: Ogiz, 1934), p. 121. The town of Shuragial was still there when the Ottoman army crossed the Akhurian at this point in 1514.

⁴⁸ The castle was mentioned in 1262. See Hovhannesian, *Hayastani berdere*, pp. 738-39.

⁴⁹ The last known coins of Anushiravan, the final Il-Khan in Iran, minted at Ani are dated 750/1349-50. Coin evidence shows that in parts of Iran the reign of Anushiravan continued, even if in a somewhat shadowy form, until 756/1355. See Sir Henry H. Howorth, *History of the Mongols from the 9th to the 19th Century*, 3 pts. (London: Longmans, Green, 1876-1888), pt. 2, p. 653.

repairs.⁵⁰ Nevertheless, Ani remained an urban settlement right until the end of the fifteenth century. The other towns appear to have remained intact, perhaps with reduced populations, until Timur's invasions of the late fourteenth century. His ferocity severely damaged some of the towns, and may have finally brought about the demise of one or two of them: evidence subsequent to the invasions is simply lacking.

In general, the European economy stagnated after its rapid crash in the 1330s and 1340s and did not start to recover until the second decade of the fifteenth century.⁵¹ But within Europe, certain centers, particularly Venice, Genoa, and Florence, had survived the recession well. The demand for Oriental products, especially silk and spices, never stopped and actually started to pick up in the late fourteenth century.⁵²

At this stage, two main avenues of trade were left. One was the Central Asian trail, which debouched at the northern Black Sea cities of Tana and Kaffa, and the other was the route from Tabriz, which functioned as a marketing center principally for Indian goods and Iranian silk, to Trebizond and then by sea to Constantinople. Timur's attacks of 1395 on Astrakhan and other cities along the Central Asian route severely jolted the pattern of trade along it.⁵³ More critically, the blockade of Constantinople by the Ottoman sultan Bayazid I from 1394 to 1402 completely cut off both the Central Asian and the Trebizond routes as a means of supplying Europe with Chinese, Indian, and Iranian products. These developments very quickly led to the emergence of Bursa as a silk emporium, both for Iranian and for Chi-

⁵⁰ T.Kh. Hakobyan, *Ani mayrakaghak*, pp. 269-70, views this as a clear indicator of decline.

⁵¹ Contamine, *L'économie médiévale*, pp. 350-51, 386-99.

⁵² On the relative robustness of the Italian cities, see, for example, Spufford, *Money and Its Uses*, pp. 287-88, 320, 350-56. For goods in Tabriz ready for export to the West in the early and mid-fifteenth century, see Heyd, *Commerce du Levant*, vol. 2, p. 507, and for an indication of the persistence of demand in the mid-fourteenth century, pp. 128-31.

⁵³ See W. [Vasili V.] Barthold, *An Historical Geography of Iran*, trans. Svat Soucek, ed. C.E. Bosworth (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1984), pp. 269-77. According to Hakob A. Manandian, *The Trade and Cities of Armenia in Relation to Ancient World Trade*, trans. Nina G. Garsoïan (Lisbon: Bertrand 1965), p. 202, and Halil Inalcik, in Halil Inalcik and Donald Quataert, eds., *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire, 1800-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 222, Timur's devastation of Tana, Saray, and Astrakhan put a stop to the trade through the Central Asian steppe to Tana and Kaffa. But that trade revived, as did the cities; on the issue, see also Sinclair, *Between the Mediterranean and Iran*.

nese silk.⁵⁴ From Tabriz to Bursa, however, one had to take a way which as far as Sivas followed the same line as the Ayas route of the previous period (Sivas was plundered and its population massacred in 1400 by Timur, and the city's role was taken over by Tokat).⁵⁵ A further line developed at the same time was one between Tabriz and Aleppo, where Italian merchants were already buying local cotton but now stood ready for Iranian and Chinese silk.⁵⁶

The latter line could not benefit Kars and Ani, since it passed essentially westward to the Lake Van cities and then to Upper Mesopotamia.⁵⁷ However the lines from Tabriz to Trebizond and from Tabriz to Bursa are worth a thought when it comes to explaining the survival of Ani as a trading center, certainly on a much reduced scale, to the end of the fifteenth century. Of these, the Tabriz-Trebizond line had operated in the mid- and late-fourteenth century before the blockade of Constantinople and resumed after the blockade was lifted. Italian activity in Trebizond did not stop until the very point of the Ottoman blockade and capture of the city in 1461, and in fact it did not stop even then.⁵⁸ The Bursa route, where movement began at the end of the fourteenth century, gained in popularity and frequency of traffic until in the second half of the fifteenth century the city had become one of the foremost silk trading centers and one of the Mediterranean's largest market cities.

⁵⁴ On the blockade of Constantinople, see Colin Imber, *The Ottoman Empire, 1300-1481* (Istanbul: Isis, 1990), pp. 44, 51-52, 55. On the rise of Bursa, see *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2d ed., vol. 1, pp. 1333-36, s.v. "Bursa". The view that the blockade of Constantinople caused the emergence of Bursa as a silk emporium is expressed for the first time in the present article; it is developed in Sinclair, *Between the Mediterranean and Iran*.

⁵⁵ On Sivas in 1400, see Marie-Mathilda Alexandrescu-Dersca, *La campagne de Timur en Anatolie (1402)* (Bucharest: Imprimeria Natională, 1942), pp. 42-45. On Tokat, see M. Tayyib Gökbilgin, "15. ve 16. asırlarda Eyâlet-i Rum" [The Eyalet of Rum in the 15th and 16th Centuries], *Vakıflar Dergisi* 6 (1965): 52-53.

⁵⁶ For this avenue of activity, see Sinclair, *Between the Mediterranean and Iran*.

⁵⁷ On Baghesh/Bitlis, the principal beneficiary of the Tabriz-Aleppo line, see Thomas A. Sinclair, "The Armenians and the Kurdish Emirs of Bitlis under the Kara Koyunlu," in Richard G. Hovannisian, ed., *Armenian Baghesh/Bitlis and Taron/Mush* (Costa Mesa: Mazda Publishers, 2001), pp. 164-67.

⁵⁸ On the Italian presence in Trebizond in the second half of the fourteenth century and up to 1461, see Heyd, *Commerce du Levant*, vol. 1, pp. 128-29, 360-65, 506; Balard, *Romanie génoise*, vol. 1, pp. 137-38; Kate Fleet, *European and Islamic Trade in the Early Ottoman State: The Merchants of Genoa and Turkey* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 23, 33-34, 104.

It could be argued that Ani and Kars did not stand to benefit from such developments, as they lay off the route. And strictly the way between Tabriz and Erzerum described by the Pegolotti itinerary of the previous period remained the shortest. Nevertheless, that route's use by commercial traffic is not attested at all between 1350 and 1500. Without the protection of Mongol *tangauls* or security officers, the route was particularly insecure, passing all the time through plains and upland pastures and not stopping at more than two or three towns between Khoi and Erzerum. Moreover, the emergence of such strongholds as Daroynk/Bayazid and Maku in the late fourteenth century suggests that between Tabriz and Bayazid, at least the line of the route had moved (eastwards, paradoxically, in this case) precisely in order to allow merchants to stop at safe towns guarded by citadels such as the formidable ones at Bayazid and Maku.⁵⁹ Instead, merchants could go through Julfa on the Arax River, a silk-gathering center where the presence of Armenian merchants is attested in the mid-fifteenth century, then the city of Nakhichevan, after which the way to Maku, on a roughly westerly line, could be taken.

It is possible that a similar logic was applied to the trajectory between Bayazid and Erzerum. By going northwest to Ani and then west and southwest to Kars and the plain of Basen, caravans could travel from one safe point to another: the caravansarays south of Surmari, Bagaran, Ani, Kars, and others on the way from Kars to the Basen plain and then within that plain. This would explain why some Iranian silk and other eastern products still came through Ani and Kars. There were other currents in cross-play, as before: traffic from Tiflis, from the Black Sea ports in western Georgia, from the Lake Van region, where the Ala Dagh palace continued to support hunting excursions and to function as a military supply point during the tenure of post-Mongol dynasties, and so on.⁶⁰ These lines of commercial movement help to explain why Ani remained alive under successive dynasties: Jalayrids, themselves Mongols; Kara Koyunlu; and Ak Koyunlu right to the end of the fifteenth century. This is the indication given by the coins, which

⁵⁹ Daroynk/Bayazid: the first mention of a castle here comes in 1387, when the castle was besieged. See Kirzioğlu, *Kars tarihi*, p. 470. The town and castle were described by Clavijo, *Embassy to Tamerlane*, p. 144. Cf. Faruk Sümer, *Kara Koyunlular* [The Kara Koyunlu], vol. 1 (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1967), pp. 49, 58. On Maku, see the discussion in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2d ed., vol. 6, pp. 200-03, s.v. "Maku."

⁶⁰ See Sümer, *Kara Koyunlular*, pp. 56-57, 77, 80, 82, 89, 120.

continue precisely to the end of the fifteenth century, though with less frequency than under the Mongols.⁶¹

Besides its commercial role, now much more limited, Ani retained, too, an administrative role. When Timur captured Ani in 1394 there was still a bishop, Mkrtich, whose two brothers helped to prevent a massacre of Armenians by killing the Turks who seem to have been charged with carrying out the massacre.⁶² The bishopric of Ani continued to exist, probably with the bishop's seat at the nearby monastery of Horomos, until at least the 1420s.⁶³ The city still had an administrative role and seems to have been the provincial capital of the dynasties which succeeded the Il-Khans, the Jalayrids, and Kara Koyunlu. These dynasties continued to mint coins at Ani, and nowhere else on the plateau.⁶⁴ The use of Ani as a local administrative capital persisted at least until the late fourteenth century and probably into the fifteenth century. What explains its use as an administrative center by the Jalayrids and Kara Koyunlu until some point in or just before the early fifteenth century and its abandonment as an administrative center after that?

As for the other settlements on the plateau, Kars remained what it had been, a small city with a walled area and strong citadel and the residence of a Turkish amir. In 1386, Timur forced the amir to surrender the city, then ordered the demolition of its fortifications. But the amir himself was not evicted, and even if he had been would very

⁶¹ See the Appendix of this chapter. T.Kh. Hakobyan, *Ani mayrakaghak*, p. 278, apparently knows the coinage only up to 1420 and therefore concludes that the city disappeared straight after that. He also states, pp. 265, 267, that initially the coins were designed to conform to a mixed Christian and Muslim taste, proving that they were designed by Christians; afterwards, the designs conformed to purely Muslim types.

⁶² Tovma Metsobetsi [Thomas of Metsop], *Patmutiun Lank-Tamuray ev hadjor-dats iurots* [History of Timur the Lame and His Successors], ed. K.Shahnazarian (Paris, 1860), pp. 44-45. Generally, on Timur's capture of the city, see Kırzioğlu, *Kars tarihi*, pp. 471-72.

⁶³ *XV dari hayeren dzeragreri hishatakaranner* [Colophons of 15th Century Manuscripts], ed. Levon S. Khachikyan, 3 pts.: (1401-1450), (1451-1480), (1481-1500) (Erevan: Armenian Academy of Sciences 1955-1967). In pt. 1, no. 315, p. 302, dated 1423, there is reference to a bishop of Ani; in pt. 2, no. 157, p. 122, a bishop Astvatsatur blesses a manuscript in the monastery of Horomos. Cf. for the possibility of a bishop of Ani resident at Horomos, in Matevosian, "Anii episkoposakan atore," pt. 2, pp. 163-64.

⁶⁴ For these coins, see the Appendix.

likely have come back after Timur's death in 1405.⁶⁵ In 1412, the fortifications were rebuilt.⁶⁶

With the decline of Ani, Kars became the leading settlement on the plateau. Since the fortifications of Ani required a large number of troops for defense, Kars would have been the logical choice for the region's seat of government. But it was the presence of the amir there that made it impossible for the Jalayrids and Kara Koyunlu to adopt Kars as their local administrative base. None of the other towns was large or central enough. As a possible candidate for the administrative center of the region, Ani was the only urban location left.

Given that Ani remained an administrative center even when it fell behind Kars in size, what explains its eventual abandonment as a seat of government? The answer seems to lie in the choice of Erevan as the new center for the whole Vanand-Shirak plateau as well as for the plain of Erevan itself. The initiative must have come from the Kara Koyunlu, effectively the controlling dynasty of Armenia from the late fourteenth to the mid-fifteenth century.⁶⁷ Before the change, the fortress of Garni in the hills south of Erevan had been the administrative center of the Erevan plain and surrounding heights. It was also an active mint until the 1430s.⁶⁸ Erevan, despite being the seat of a bishop, had been only a small town.⁶⁹ Erevan's role can only have been enhanced by the well-known, disputed transfer of the catholicos seat of Armenia from Sis in Cilicia to Echmiadzin in 1441.

What had happened to the smaller towns of the Vanand-Shirak plateau in the period between the Mongols and Ottomans? Given that

⁶⁵ *The Zafarnāma* [The Account of Victory] by *Maulānā Sharafuddin Ālī of Yazd*, ed. M.M. Ilahdad, 2 vols. (Calcutta: Baptist Mission Press 1887-1888), vol. 2, p. 400, which mentions both city walls and citadel; cf. *XV dari hishatakaranner*, pt. 1, no. 300, p. 275 (date given as 836/1387).

⁶⁶ *XV dari hishatakaranner*, pt. 1, no. 136, p. 134, where there is reference to a different amir, Pir Husayn.

⁶⁷ In 1440 a Yakup Bey was the governor appointed at Erevan by Kara Koyunlu Sultan Jahan Shah. See Kırzioğlu, *Kars tarihi*, p. 488, cf. 489.

⁶⁸ A colophon refers to the *gavar* (district) of Garni, meaning that Garni is the capital. See *XV dari hishatakaranner*, pt. 1, no. 417, pp. 391-92.

⁶⁹ *XV dari hishatakaranner*, pt. 1, no. 51, pp. 50-51. Part A of the colophon refers to Erevan as *geghakaghak* (small town), while Part B refers to it as *mayrakaghak* (mother town; bishop's seat), whereas in no. 300, p. 276, it is referred to as *metsavan* (large town; market town). Erevan was sacked by Timur in 1387. See also Archak Tchobanian, *La roseraie d'Arménie*, 2 vols. (Paris: Leroux, 1918-1929), vol. 2, pp. 107-08; *Haykakan Sovetakan Hanragitaran*, vol. 3, p. 551; Hovhannesian, *Hayastani berdere*, p. 902.

Kechror became a *sanjak* (county) capital under the Ottomans, it seems likely that it survived as a fortified town, but there is no evidence that it was the seat of an amir. Farther east, the town of Bagaran, with its citadel on the rim of the plateau and apron of walls on the face of the escarpment below, still existed. It is not known if it had contracted, because the reference to it concerns the attack on the town by Timur's forces in 1394. In this attack, many people were killed, some by being thrown from the cliffs onto the plain and it is not clear how much the town recovered.⁷⁰

A short distance farther south, another fortress, whose existence is not attested before, was Tigranaberd or Aghchaghala, not far north of the Akhurian/Arax confluence. It is perhaps not a coincidence that Tigranaberd protected a track running down from the plateau to the plain of Erevan.⁷¹ Surmari was now of some size and apparently very active. It had both a citadel and a city wall, according to Clavijo, the Aragonese ambassador to Timur's court at Samarkand, who visited the city in 1404. It was also the seat of a minor amir, who appears to have had no relationship of vassalage with the amir of Kars. Surmari's fortifications were destroyed, or perhaps slighted, in 1386 by Timur, but by the time of Clavijo's visit had been rebuilt.⁷² Farther north, nothing is heard of Shuragial and Mren: Shuragial seems to have survived, but Mren had probably much contracted.⁷³ Its absence from the sources is not conclusive, but with a much diminished population at Ani and a generally diminished pace of activity in the region as a whole, a significant loss of population at Mren would not be surprising.

Kechror would appear to have survived because it functioned as a market center for a certain part of the plateau toward the south. Surmari and Bagaran, like Kars and Ani, were no doubt sustained by trade, whether intercontinental, medium-range, as between Georgia

⁷⁰ *XV dari hishatakaranner*, pt. 1, no. 300, p. 287 (Grigor Khlatetsi); cf. Hovhannesian, *Hayastani berdere*, p. 663.

⁷¹ *XV dari hishatakaranner*, pt. 1, no. 126, p. 124. That Tigranaberd/Aghchaghala was on a path descending toward the Erevan plain is shown by Shah Abbas' retreat over that route. See Kirzioğlu, *Kars tarihi*, p. 531.

⁷² For Timur's siege and sack in 1386, see Sharaf al-Din Ali Yazdi, *Zafarnama*, vol. 1, pp. 399-400 ("Surmalu"). Timur executed the amir in 1386; the one Clavijo found in 1404 was Timur's subject.

⁷³ The Ottoman army, returning from the battle of Chaldiran in 1514, crossed the river at Shuragial and passed the *kale*, the walled settlement, there. It seems likely, if the town had survived after the inimical conditions of the mid- and late-fifteenth century, it would have been functioning in the post-Mongol period generally.

and parts of Armenia, or short-range, as the carriage of goods between Kars and Surmari or between Bagaran and Daroynk. Goods and people coming from the south and southeast to Surmari would rise to the plateau at Bagaran and continue to Ani and so to Kars and Erzerum or to Tiflis. As before, Bagaran was connected to Kars by a direct road which did not pass through Ani.⁷⁴ Pir Husayn, the amir who restored the fortifications of Kars in 1412, apparently controlled the southeast corner of the plateau.⁷⁵ All this helps to explain the size of the city of Kars in the period. North of Ani, nothing is heard of Shuragial, but this does not mean that the town had completely dispersed. Perhaps there were other forces at work such as Jalayrid and Kara Koyunlu taxation policies in the area and security concerns, which could thin out the rural population, reduce production, and thereby eliminate the need for local market centers.

The Kara Koyunlu were supplanted by the Ak Koyunlu in Armenia during the mid-fifteenth century, and when the Ak Koyunlu were finally defeated and expelled from Iran and Armenia by the Safavid dynasty in the early sixteenth century, the plateau of Kars and Ani passed into Safavid hands. The fundamental cause of the withdrawal of trade from this region seems to have been the internal conflicts within the Ak Koyunlu empire after the death of the best-known of its sultans, Uzun Hasan, in 1478. These conflicts became especially intense in the 1490s and often involved the capital and principal silk-distributing center, Tabriz, itself. A subsidiary cause must have been the Ak Koyunlu expeditions against Georgia, which were undertaken principally for reasons of plunder but would have deprived Ani, Kars, and the other towns in Shirak of one source of their livelihood. These expeditions were aimed first at western Georgia, including Akhaltsikh (1458, 1461), then at Tiflis itself (1476-77, 1488-89). After so much warfare, significant trade was no longer feasible. In the early sixteenth century, when the Ottomans conquered first Erzerum, then Kars, they found an emirate, that of Sevindik Khan, controlling Kars, Shuragial, Basen, and Erzerum, but subject to the Iranian Safavids.⁷⁶ In 1514,

⁷⁴ In 1386, Timur went straight from Surmari to Kars. This probably meant that he climbed on to the plateau at Bagaran, and from there proceeded directly over the plain to Kars. See Sharaf al-Din Ali Yazdi, *Zafarnama*, vol. 1, p. 400.

⁷⁵ Pir Husayn is the local lord referred to in the colophon of 1412, cited in note 66 above.

⁷⁶ On internal conflicts in the Ak Koyunlu realm, see John E. Woods, *The Akkoyunlu: Clan, Confederation, Empire* (rev. ed., Salt Lake City: University of Utah

when the Ottoman army returned from Tabriz via the Arax valley, Shuragial, and Kars, even the latter city was in ruins.⁷⁷

To sum up, in the Mongol period Ani and Kars were sustained by traffic along the great intercontinental corridors running between Tabriz and the west via the ports of Trebizond and Ayas. Ani was an important administrative center, both under the Zakarians and as the personal estate of the Il-Khan. A number of large towns, such as Bagaran and Mren, lay on subsidiary tracks; some of the commercial activity in question was in the nature of interregional, as opposed to intercontinental, trade. However these subsidiary tracks made a large contribution to the commercial vibrancy and viability of Kars and Ani.

With the depletion of trading activity in the following 150 years, the region was partially de-urbanized. Kars probably survived as a minor city until the mid-fifteenth century; Ani equally so, and it evidently remained a small town even into the Ottoman period, but its trading role had been much enfeebled and eventually its administrative functions were transferred to Erevan. During this post-Mongol period, one of the small towns, Kechror, very likely survived; of the others, some were lost; others clearly survived until the late fourteenth century, but the fate of some is unknown thereafter. After warfare and oppressive taxation, trade had deserted the plateau by the time of the first Ottoman incursion in 1514. By then, the urban network may be said to have been unraveled.

The Early Ottoman Period

At this stage, when an Ottoman army first appeared in the region, the border with the Safavids lay well to the west; initially even Erzinka/Erzinjan was controlled by the Safavids. The border was gradually pushed eastwards. A dead and empty Erzerum was taken at some point between 1518 and 1520.⁷⁸ Savage wars took place during

Press, 1999), pp. 127-28, 130-31, 136, 141-43, 151-64; on the Georgian expeditions, pp. 89-90, 122-23, 142-43. On Sevindik, see M. Fahrettin Kırzioğlu, *Osmanlıların Kafkas-Elleri'ni fethi (1451-1590)* [The Ottoman Conquest of the Caucasian Regions, 1451-1590] (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1976), p. 111.

⁷⁷ Kırzioğlu, *Kars tarihi*, p. 489.

⁷⁸ In the tax census of 1520, Erzerum is shown as a newly captured part of the sanjak of Baiburd, whereas in the census of the same sanjak from 1516 to 1518, the immediate district of Erzerum is not included at all. See İsmet Miroğlu, *XVI. yüzyılda Bayburt Sancağı* [The Sanjak of Baiburd in the Sixteenth Century] (Istanbul: Anadolu

the years 1529 and 1534, and the Ottomans may have broken into the Vanand plain, taking the city of Kars, in 1534. Possibly they captured it in raids in 1537 and possibly later still. But the Ottomans were unable to advance farther east. For the time being, the plateau remained a border zone, and, in the mid-sixteenth century, a war zone.⁷⁹ The Ottomans were unable even to refortify Kars, which they had probably decided should become a provincial capital before they had conquered the whole of the region. In 1548, they attempted a refortification, but the workmen were chased away by Safavid forces, and the half-finished construction was demolished.⁸⁰

The opportunity came in the campaigns of 1578 to 1590, during which the Ottoman army not only captured Erevan but also advanced far along the trade route and into the silk-producing regions, establishing provinces known as *beylerbeyilik*s with capitals at Erevan, Lori, Tabriz, Shamakhi, and Derbent.⁸¹ Kars was refortified in 1579, soon after the initial campaign began.⁸² It was also built up as a city. New

Yakası Bayburt Kültür ve Yardımlaşma Derneği, 1975), pp. 25-27. On the city's emptiness at the point of capture, see Ronald C. Jennings, "Urban Population in the Sixteenth Century: A Study of Kayseri, Karaman, Amasya, Trabzon and Erzurum," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 7 (1976): 47.

⁷⁹ In Kırzioğlu's view (*Kars tarihi*, pp. 520-51, and accepted in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2d ed., "Kars," p. 670), Kars was captured in the Ottoman offensive toward Tabriz in 1534. This offensive, however, went by way of Alashkert and Archesh, that is, well to the south of the Kars plain. Documents dating to the years 1534-40 do not show Kars itself as under Ottoman administration, though in 1537-39 places on the approaches to the Kars plain, or on its southern margin, were. On the other hand, the episode of 1548 in which the Ottomans undertook the reconstruction of Kars' fortifications but were stopped by a Safavid attack suggests that the city had first to be taken by Ottoman forces before its fortifications could be restored. Perhaps Kars was taken sometime in 1548, shortly before the attempted refortification. In the campaigns of the late 1540s and early 1550s, Ottoman forces attacked Erevan, Surmari, Shuragial, Childir, and places farther east. See Kırzioğlu, *Kafkas-Elleri*, pp. 160-66, 170-71, 188-89, 226, 237, 273-74, 286-90.

⁸⁰ The defenders were killed after surrendering. See Kırzioğlu, *Kafkas-Elleri*, pp. 188-89.

⁸¹ Bekir Kütükoğlu, *Osmanlı-İran siyasi münasebetleri (1578-1612)* [Ottoman-Iranian Political Relations, 1578-1612] (Istanbul: İstanbul Fethi Cemiyeti, 1993), pp. 59-70; Donald E. Pitcher, *An Historical Geography of the Ottoman Empire from Earliest Times to the End of the Sixteenth Century* (Leiden: Brill, 1972), pp. 128-29.

⁸² Kütükoğlu, *Osmanlı-İran siyasi münasebetleri*, pp. 75-77; Kırzioğlu, *Kafkas-Elleri*, pp. 325-26; Faruk Sümer, *Safevî devletinin kuruluşu ve gelişmesinde Anadolu Türklerinin rolü (Şah İsmail ile halefleri ve Anadolu Türkleri)* [The Role of the Anatolian Turks in the Foundation and Development of the Safavid State (Shah Ismail, His Successors, and the Anatolian Turks)] (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1992), p. 127; cf.

mosques, baths, and other public buildings were rapidly constructed.⁸³ The southern and eastern districts of the plateau were seized, and the Ottoman beylerbeyilik of Kars constituted.⁸⁴ The province was composed not only of the Vanand-Shirak plateau but also extended south into the Arax valley, where Kaghzvan/Kaghisman was the *sanjak* (county) capital, as well as northward into the district of Lake Childir, where much of the population was Georgian.⁸⁵

Ottoman control of the route along the Arax via Tabriz and Nakhichevan, and, to an extent, of the silk-producing regions themselves, now meant that the Vanand-Shirak plateau temporarily came back into use as the vehicle of long-distance trade from Iran to Bursa and the markets of Europe. Silk caravans traveled from Erevan (rather than Surmari) and Kars into the plain of Basen and on to Erzerum. The conditions of the high Middle Ages had been restored. Even after the wars of 1603 to 1605, in which Safavid Iran regained the western silk-producing areas and the silk route as far as Erevan, and after the attempt over the years 1603 to 1629 to divert the silk trade from the Ottoman Empire (including the Lake Van region and Baghdad) to the Indian Ocean, the route through Erevan and Kars continued in use.⁸⁶

Remembering the linkage in the fortunes of Ani and other nearby urban settlements to the trade route, the commercial circumstances of the early Ottoman occupation might lead one to expect that Ani itself would begin to revive as a commercial center as would the surrounding small towns would revive, aided by the greater security of Ottoman rule. What was the outcome? Ani was no more than a small town behind the long medieval city walls. Initially, in 1578, it was made into a *sanjak* capital, but this arrangement, which would have brought some urban functions to the settlement and might have helped to stimulate

Başbakanlık Arşivi, Mühimme Defteri [Prime Minister's Archive, Register of Important Affairs, that is, the texts of documents issued by the chancery after decisions of the *divan*] 38, no. 115 (from catalogue only).

⁸³ Kütükoğlu, *Osmanlı-İran siyasi münasebetleri*, p. 77. Five mosques were built in the early years. See Kırzioğlu, *Kars tarihi*, p. 534. For later constructions, see pp. 531-34, 537-38; cf. pp. 546-47.

⁸⁴ Pitcher, *Historical Geography*, p. 127.

⁸⁵ Andreas Birken, *Die Provinzen des Osmanischen Reiches* (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 1976), pp. 170-71.

⁸⁶ On the attempt at diversion of the trade away from the Ottoman Empire, see Inalcik and Quataert, *Social and Economic History*, pp. 246-48; on the continuation of the route in the mid-seventeenth century, partly owing to the rise of Smyrna, see p. 245.

its growth as a city, was soon abandoned.⁸⁷ There seems to have been a janissary garrison there,⁸⁸ and some repairs were carried out to the fortifications, presumably to the citadel.⁸⁹ But there was no tendency toward a revival of the city's former commercial activity or administrative status. The decision had already been taken to make Kars into the provincial capital. Commercially, Kars seems to have assumed part of Ani's former role, but the more fundamental shift in commercial function seems to have been from Ani to Erevan, which had been developed in the post-Mongol period and was now ready to take over the role of entrepôt in the silk and other trade with Constantinople and Bursa.

The plateau's small towns seem, to an extent, to have benefited from the return to more stable conditions under the Ottomans and from the renewed passage of trade. But before the region's incorporation into the Ottoman Empire in two stages in the mid-sixteenth century, the plateau appears to have been left desolate by reason of neglect on the part of the overlord powers, particularly the Ak Koyunlu and Safavids, and the insecure conditions. Despite improved security under the Ottomans, conditions were not ripe for a renaissance of the urban network seen in the high Middle Ages.

To an extent Ottoman rule may have safeguarded the existence of one or two towns. At Kechror/Gechvan, the Ottomans repaired the town gate in 1579 and made the town the seat of a sanjakbey.⁹⁰ A sanjak of Shuragial or Shuregel was eventually created.⁹¹ But it is not clear that the sanjak capital was at Shuragial. By this stage, the local

⁸⁷ Kırzioğlu, *Kafkas-Elteri*, pp. 324, 326; Birken, *Provinzen*, pp. 170-71. Evliya Çelebi found a town here in the mid-seventeenth century. See Evliya Çelebi b. Derviş Mehmed Zillî Evliya Çelebi, *Seyahatnamesi: Topkapı Sarayı Bağdat 304 yazmasının transkripsiyon-dizini*, [The Travel Account by Evliya Çelebi: Transcription and Index of the Manuscript, Baghdad no. 304, in the Topkapı Palace], ed. Z. Kurşun et al., vol. 2 (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Bankası, 1996), p. 170. Manandian, *Trade and Cities*, p. 199, believes that Ani had already become a village in the sixteenth century.

⁸⁸ Başbakanlık Arşivi, Mühimme Defteri 46, no. 779, of 990 H./1582, and Mühimme Defteri 48, no. 672, of 990 H. (an agha of the citadel); cf. Mühimme Defteri 47, nos. 143, 382, of 990 H. (from catalogues only).

⁸⁹ Kırzioğlu, *Kars tarihi*, p. 526.

⁹⁰ Kırzioğlu, *Kafkas-Elteri*, pp. 324, 326. To supplement the sanjakbey's income, he was awarded income from sanjaks farther west, those of Ispir and Penek in the *vilayet* (province) of Erzerum. See Rhoads Murphey, *Regional Structure in the Ottoman Economy* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1987), p. 105.

⁹¹ Kırzioğlu, *Kafkas-Elteri*, p. 326; Birken, *Provinzen*, pp. 170-71.

market center may have moved to its eventual nineteenth-century location, Gyumri (Alexandropol), some way off the plateau and farther to the northeast. Nor does the creation of a sanjak capital offer firm evidence that the settlement was a town rather than a village. It means only that a location was needed for certain government functions and in particular the court of the *kadı* (judge).⁹² Surmari, like Bagaran and Mren, is no longer heard of, at least as a town. By this time, Surmari may have fallen out of use as a trading station, and merchandise no longer climbed onto the plateau at Bagaran or crossed it to Kars or went to Ani along the Akhurian. All traffic seems to have gone by way of Erevan. The Ottomans did maintain Maghazberd, a castle southeast of Ani on the lip of the Akhurian ravine, probably to protect the track connecting Kars and Erevan for commercial reasons and perhaps also partly to protect the approaches to Ani and Kars for military reasons.⁹³ Tigranaberd/Aghchaghala was also kept up, for obvious military reasons, in the early Ottoman occupation.⁹⁴ Thus, Ani failed to regain its former role and had no chance of doing so. The smaller towns of the plateau such as Mren and Bagaran failed as a group to reappear and were now villages, even though two of them were made into seats of government and may conceivably on that account have had a certain urban character. But despite the determined Ottoman build-up of Kars, the plateau as a whole had effectively been de-urbanized.

Summary

In the Mongol period, Ani was preeminent among the urban settlements of the Vanand-Shirak plateau, all basically of an Armenian character. It was a vehicle of the continuing, but now waning, inter-continental trade of the high Middle Ages between East Asia and Iran, on the one hand, and Europe, on the other. Kars, also on the principal track towards Erzerum and the West, was a small, heavily-fortified city,

⁹² The *kadı* presided over a court where Ottoman law was applied and was also the instrument of the Ottoman sultan in certain executive matters.

⁹³ Maghazberd was a sanjak capital in 1588, but by the early seventeenth century had been abandoned as such. It could never have been a town. The treaty of 1639 between the Ottoman and Safavid empires stipulated that it should be knocked down, but this seems not to have happened. By 1767, the castle had fallen into the hands of a local chieftain or *derebey*. See Kırzioğlu, *Kars tarihi*, pp. 326, 545; cf. p. 548.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 529; cf. p. 531.

perhaps under a Turkish amir, certainly a more secure site than Ani but in commercial and administrative terms its poor relative.

The great driver of the prosperity of these two cities was the traffic running westward from Tabriz toward Erzerum, after which it reached Europe via Trebizond or Ayas. Despite the more direct "Pegolotti route," which followed plains and other open land but passed by very few castles or fortified towns, the Vanand-Shirak plateau offered secure stopping-places, whether on the main track through Nakhichevan and Erevan or on the subsidiary track through Surmari and Bagaran. The latter carried more local traffic. To the north went tracks to Tiflis from Ani and to western Georgia and the Black Sea ports from Kars. These commercial currents contributed to the viability and efficacy of Ani and Kars and sustained certain towns along the eastern rim of the plateau such as Mren and Bagaran.

In the post-Mongol period, during the century and a half after the collapse of Il-Khanid power around 1350, there was a drop in the intensity of traffic, owing to the depressed state of the European economy, but never a complete hiatus. With one short gap, Trebizond remained an outlet for goods marketed at Tabriz until the capture of Trebizond by the Ottomans in 1461, while Bursa's activity started at the end of the fourteenth century and kept going uninterruptedly to the end of the period. The continued existence of Ani and Kars in the post-Mongol period is owed mostly to the perpetuation of the Erzerum trade and to the enduring preference of this traffic for a safer line past fortified towns and castles. Such a preference would explain the sustained vitality of one or two of the small towns at the plateau's edge. In any case, traffic of a more interregional nature continued to pass along the plateau's tracks. All the same, Ani declined and may have been no more than a small town by the end of the fifteenth century.

Kars became the leading city on the plateau, not by virtue of its own growth but because of the rapid dispersion of population from Ani. Still, because a Turkish emir had taken over Kars, Ani remained the administrative capital of the plateau until the early fifteenth century. Thereafter, Ani gave way to Erevan as an administrative capital. Of the small towns, some seem to have declined and become villages, but others remained intact, particularly to the south, where trading conditions kept Surmari and Bagaran in a flourishing condition at least until the fifteenth century. Nevertheless, to judge from the evidence of the early Ottoman occupation, at some stage in the pre-Ottoman period, perhaps the late fifteenth century, the small towns largely melted

away. Possibly the reason was neglect and oppressive taxation as well as extremely insecure conditions in the countryside under the Ak Koyunlu and Safavids. But whatever the reason, the region became largely de-urbanized.

When the Ottoman authorities were finally able to refortify and start building up Kars as a city in 1579, for a time the trading conditions of the high Middle Ages returned. Silk caravans again traveled up along the Arax and through the Vanand-Shirak plateau. This time, however, they stopped at Erevan rather than staying by the Arax and passing through Surmari. But Ani was unaffected by the temporary revival of trade and remained nothing more than a small town. Its administrative and commercial functions had passed to Kars on the one side and to Erevan on the other. At least in the short term, the process of decline and desertion was irreversible. Only one or two of the plateau's small towns had survived, while the others failed to revive. Although two of them were made sanjak capitals, the plateau as a whole had been de-urbanized.

What happened subsequently? After the Safavid Shah Abbas recovered the western silk-producing areas and the Arax valley, including Erevan, in the wars of 1603-05, he deported thousands of Armenians to Isfahan and to the silk-producing regions. Isfahan became the new point of assembly for the majority of silk caravans.⁹⁵ This meant that the Lake Van route to Aleppo was revived for a time. Nevertheless, the Erevan-Kars-Erzerum line remained in use in the mid- and late-seventeenth century. During that century, Smyrna/Izmir developed as an outlet for Ottoman goods and those from countries farther east. By the 1660s, Smyrna had replaced Aleppo as the principal export entrepôt for Iranian raw silk.⁹⁶ Later, and particularly in the wars of 1725-30 and the internal disruption in Iran of the mid-eighteenth century, the silk trade was interrupted and the Erevan-Kars route was abandoned. Commercial traffic eventually returned to the Bayazid-Alashkert corri-

⁹⁵ On the Armenian traders in New Julfa who organized the trade from Isfahan to Aleppo and the European cities, see Vazken S. Ghougassian, *The Emergence of the Armenian Diocese of New Julfa in the Seventeenth Century* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998). On Armenian merchants engaged in the trade in Aleppo, see Avedis K. Sanjian, *The Armenian Communities in Syria under Ottoman Dominion* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1965), pp. 48-50, 503-04.

⁹⁶ On the growth of exports to Europe from Smyrna, see Edmund Herzig, "The Volume of Iranian Raw Silk Exports in the Safavid Period," *Iranian Studies* 25 (1992): 69-71.

dor. However, the line through the Vanand-Shirak plain was not destined ever to see intercontinental trade again.

The plateau, moreover, was a border area in which wars were fought and to which relatively little attention was paid by the Ottoman government. There was no prospect, therefore, that urban life might come back. Ani was finally deserted, it seems, in the eighteenth century,⁹⁷ and the last remaining inhabitants moved to a village site outside the long medieval walls. The interior became a robbers' nest. Even now Geçvan, Şüregel, and Mren are villages, while Bagaran is deserted, as for that matter is Surmari. The plateau remains a region of villages, looking toward the single small city of Kars in its midst but looking backwards in time, too, at the empty walled site of Ani as the great city of its past.

APPENDIX

Coins Minted at Ani and Other Cities

The purpose of this appendix is to indicate the general scale of minting at Ani in the Il-Khanid and post-Il-Khanid periods. It is not exhaustive by any means, and many aspects of the coins have been left out, such as denomination, weight, and type. Only silver coins and gold coins have been included.

Abbreviations:

Album, "Hoard, Iskandar" = Stephen Album, "A Hoard of Silver Coins from the Time of Iskandar Qara Qoyunlu," *Numismatic Chronicle*, ser. 7, 16 (1976): 109-57.

ANS = Collection of American Numismatic Society.

British Museum = Coin Collection of British Museum.

Kolbas, *Iran* = Judith Kolbas, *The Mongols in Iran: Chingiz Khan to Uljaytu, 1220-1309* (London: Routledge, 2006).

Lane-Poole, *Catalogue* = Stanley Lane-Poole, *Catalogue of Oriental Coins in the British Museum*, 10 vols., London, 1875-1990.

Markov, *Katalog Dzhelairidskikh monet* = A.K. Markov, *Katalog: Dzhelairidskikh monet* [Catalogue of the Jalayrid Coins], St. Petersburg, 1897.

Mousheghian, "Bilan comparé" = Kh.A. Musheghyan, "Bilan comparé des découvertes numismatiques à Ani et à Dvin," *Revue des études arméniennes*, n.s., 18 (1984): 461-69.

⁹⁷ Cf. Manandian, *Trade and Cities*, p. 199.

- Mousheghian et al., *Coins from Ani* = Khatchatur Mousheghian et al., *History and Coin Finds in Armenia: Coins from Ani, Capital of Armenia (4th c. B.C.-19th c. A.D.)* (Wetteren: Moneta, 2000).
- Mousheghian et al., *Coins from Garni* = Khatchatur Mousheghian et al., *History and Coin Finds in Armenia: Coins from Garni (4th c. B.C.-19th c. A.D.)* (Wetteren: Moneta, 2000).
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Ani

Il-Khans

Before Ghazan

684/1285-86	1 coin	Kolbas, <i>Iran</i> , pp. 247, 249 (Bastam Museum, Iran, no. 44).
(Arghun)		

Ghazan, 694-703/1295-1304

704/1304-5	2 coins	Seïfeddini, <i>Monety Il'khanov</i> , p. 131.
D.oblit.	1 coin	Mousheghian et al., <i>Coins from Ani</i> , p. 110.

Uljaytu, 703-16/1304-16

716/1316-17	1 coin	Tübingen GE7 A4.
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Abu Sa'id, 716-36/1316-35

723/1323,	4 coins	Tübingen GG3 D4-D6, E1 (dates are of D5, D6).
724/1324		

718/1318-19, 3 coins Seïfeddini, *Monety Il'khanov*, pp. 59, 145, 147
 725/1325, (discussion on pp. 158, 160, 199).
 734/1333-34

Muhammad, 736-38/1336-38

737/1336-37 2 coins ANS 1922. 216. 342; 1959. 165. 254.
 738/1337-38 1 coin Seïfeddini, *Monety Il'khanov*, pp. 60, 173 (discus-
 sion of mints, pp. 171-72; of minting at Ani, p.
 198).

Sulayman, 739-46/1339-46

742/1341-42, 2 coins Tübingen GL 6 A2, A3.
 743/1342-43
 743/1342-43 5 coins Seïfeddini, *Monety Il'khanov*, pp. 150, 177-78
 (discussion pp. 172, 189, 198, 200).
 743, 745 2 coins Seïfeddini, *Monetnoe delo*, vol. 2, p. 51; cf. table
 17 and discussion, pp. 16, 68.
 750/1349-50 7 coins Seïfeddini, *Monetnoe delo*, vol. 2, p. 53, cf. p. 69.

Anushiravan, 745-57/1344-56

Jalayrids

Uways, 757-76/1356-74 (See Zambaur, *Münzprägungen*, p. 35).

Husayn, 776-84/1374-82

777/1375-76, 2 coins Rabino, "Coins of the Jala'ir," p. 102 (See also
 779/1377-78 Zambaur, *Münzprägungen*, p. 35; and for discus-
 sion, Seïfeddini, *Monetnoe delo*, vol. 2, p. 88).

Kara Koyunlu

*Kara Yusuf alone (probably struck during the period 812-13/1409-11)*⁹⁸

No date 2 coins Tübingen HE7 D3, D4.
 No date 1 coin Rabino, "Coins of the Jala'ir," p. 111.

*Pir Budaq alone (probably struck during the period 813-14/1410-12)*⁹⁹

No date 1 coin Tübingen "add."
 No date 1 coin Rabino, "Coins of the Jala'ir," p. 111.
 No date 1 coin, Mousheghian, "Bilan compare," p. 468.
 gold

⁹⁸ See Stephen Album, *A Checklist of Popular Islamic Coins* (Santa Rosa: Stephen Album, 1993), p. 53, no. 2477.

⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 53, no. 2482.

Ak Koyunlu*[Uzun] Hasan, 857-83/1453-78*

No date 1 coin ANS 1920.999.173.

Ya'qub, 883-96/1478-90

No date 3 coins Tübingen HF5 F5, F6; HF6 A1.

Kars*Abu Sa'id, 716-36/1335*[733-34 or 1 coin Tübingen GI2 E2.
734-35/1332-
35]**Garni****Il-Khans***Muhammad, 736-38/1336-38*737/1336-37, 2 coins Seïfeddini, *Monetnoe delo* vol. 2, p. 47; cf. p. 68
38/1337-38 (as Garin).738 1 coin Tübingen GK2 B2 (see also Zambaur,
Münzprägungen, p. 201, as Karin).*Sulayman, 739-46/1339-46*

740/1339-40 1 coin Tübingen GL7 D6.

745/1344-45 1 coin Seïfeddini, *Monetnoe delo*, vol. 2, p. 52 (as Garin).*Anushiravan, 745-57/1344-56*746/1345-46 29 coins Mousheghian et al., *Coins from Garni*, p. 94, nos.
36-64. Weights mostly 1.40 grams.

747 10 coins Ibid., nos. 462-71. Weights mostly 1.40 grams.

Jalayrids*Ahmad, 784-813/1382-1409*No date¹⁰⁰ 1 coin Rabino, "Coins of the Jala'ir," p. 102. (See also
Zambaur, *Münzprägungen*, p. 204, as Kurbi, and
for a Timurid coin, p. 207, as Kurin or Kuri).

¹⁰⁰ The date was before Timur's sack of Baghdad in 1401. See Album, *Checklist*, p. 49, nos. 2309-13.

Kara Koyunlu

Kara Yusuf alone (probably struck during the period 812-13/1409-11)

No date	1 coin	British Museum 1971.3-20-79.
No date	1 coin	ANS 1922.216.352.

Pir Budaq alone (probably struck during the period 813-14/1410-12)

No date	1 coin	Tübingen "add."
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Pir Budaq and Kara Yusuf (probably minted during 816-21/1413-19)¹⁰¹

No date	1 coin	Rabino, "Coins of the Jala'ir," p. 111.
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Iskender, 823-41/1420-38

No date	2 coins	Tübingen HE7 D3, D4: see Album, "Hoard, Iskandar": nos. 32, 33, p. 142.
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Erevan**Il-Khans**

Abu Sa'id, 716-36/1335

33 Kh. (734-35/1333-35)	1 coin, gold	Lane-Poole, <i>Catalogue</i> , vol. 6, no. 173, pp. 63-64.
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Muhammad, 736-38/1336-38

[?]	1 coin	British Museum 1985.2-19-11.
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Sulayman, 739-46/1339-46

741/1340-41, and no date	2 coins	Tübingen GL8 B5, B6.
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Anushiravan, 745-57/1344-56

746/1345-46	29 coins	Mousheghian et al., <i>Coins from Garni</i> , p. 94, nos. 65-93. Mostly 1.40 grams.
747/1346-47	2 coins	Seïfeddini, <i>Monetnoe delo</i> , vol. 2, pp. 52, 67.
747	2 coins	Seïfeddini, <i>Monety Il'khanov</i> , p. 37.
750/1349-50	1 coin	Seïfeddini, <i>Monety Il'khanov</i> , p. 196; cf. p. 190, discussion.

¹⁰¹ On these coins, the titulature suggests that Kara Yusuf is the vassal of his son, Pir Budaq. Such coins were minted in the period 816-21/1413-19.